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FBI may probe leak of secret document

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The White House, infuriated by the leaked publication of a top-secret National Security Council document detailing plans for covert and political action against Nicaragua, may call for an FBI investigation of the incident.

National Security Adviser William P. Clark said yesterday he was "troubled" by the leak and publication by The New York Times of the detailed document. But other White House officials said they were furious and wanted the leak of the highly classified document tracked down. The FBI will intervene only if requested to do so by the White House, and last night no decision had been made.

The authenticity of the document was not questioned by the White House. But officials said they were informed beforehand that The New York Times intended to publish the document, which resulted from an NSC planning group meeting on Central American policy. "We understand the newspaper had a retyped copy of the document, but we have not yet completed a word-for-word check," said one informed official.

The document apparently was retyped to remove the arcane government heading and to conceal the identity of

the official who gave it to The New York Times.

The incident brings sharply into focus the distress in the White House and the NSC about reported differences of opinion with the State Department about American efforts to counter activi-

ties of the Sandinista government in support of leftist rebel groups in El Salvador and Guatemala. The original National Security Decision Directive 17, which was approved by Reagan in November 1981, approved a broad plan of CIA, military assistance and political plans to prevent "the proliferation of Cuba-model states" in Central America.

The classified document published yesterday in The New York Times was a summary paper detailing U.S. objectives, strategy and policy implications. A well-informed White House source described the publication as devastating as well as a serious infringement of security regulations.

The heart of the debate within the administration apparently is that some State Department officials consider the policy to be a violation of the law, because cutting off Nicaraguan arms to insurgents in one country was the original objective, and in practice, the objective has become the unseating of the Sandinista regime.

Officials said yesterday that the time for objections to a policy is during the stage before a decision is made. After the president signs off on a policy, they said, it is the obligation of officials to abide by the policy or leave the government.

Clark is reported to be increasingly disturbed by the inability of administration officials to obtain unity of opinion and execution in the career foreign service. The administration also is coming under heavy verbal fire from Capitol Hill because of the policy of supporting

guerrillas, operating from Honduras, against the Marxist military forces of Nicaragua. It is from Nicaragua that the United States believes revolution and arms are being exported to the neighboring Central American states.

Deputy White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes cautioned that reporters should "try to understand what this document is, at what point it may have been drafted and what standing it had. The point is that the president's policies with regard to Cuba are well known. We certainly oppose what the Cubans are doing and the Soviet resupply of Cuba and their presence there and the expansionist ideas they have."

Reagan apparently attended the April 1982 meeting at which it was decided to carry out a U.S. effort in Central America under terms of NSDD 17. This plan gave general approval for covert, military, political and economic measures. The April document went into considerable detail about such things as increased intelligence activities in Central America as well as stepped up military training for government forces in the region's republics.

Although the printed document is a year old, its publication comes at a time when guerrillas operating from Honduras are causing increased alarm among the Sandinistas in the northern regions of Nicaragua.